
PRESENTING THE COLLECTION

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A SURVEY OF ZAYDĪ FĪQH AND TAFSĪR MANUSCRIPTS AT BERNARD QUARITCH LTD.

INTRODUCTION

Bernard Quaritch Ltd. is one of the original members of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association and the oldest professional body of its kind in the world. Founded by Bernard Quaritch (1819—1899) in 1847 in London, the company has been buying and selling rare books and manuscripts within various disciplines.

Bernard Quaritch and its Islamic department have a deep interest in the handwritten legacy of the Arab and Islamic world and in European books about the region. The department is particularly experienced in the finding, formation and placement of themed collections suitable for national institutions and / or private libraries.

This article is a survey of the *Zaydī fiqh* and *tafsīr* manuscripts currently available in the collection of Bernard Quaritch Ltd. The article includes a general introduction to the different branches of Shī'ī Islam and to the *Zaydiyya* in particular followed by a list of the manuscripts (with abstracts) in an alphabetical order according to author's last name. This is a collection of fourteen *Zaydī* manuscripts that have been purchased a few years ago by Bernard Quaritch Ltd. from a London based collector who has had it in his library for over a decade. It sheds light on and presents access to manuscript copies that have been previously unknown to modern scholarship. Though these texts are well known, the concerned manuscript copies however would be of an interest to experts in the field of critical textual analysis and editing, and they would certainly be of a great interest to

those concerned with preserving the heritage of the Islamic world in general and of Yamani scholarship in particular. During my seven years of experience in Islamic palaeography and codicology while working closely with Islamic manuscripts, these are the only *Zaydī* manuscripts I have had the opportunity to witness and examine. It is clear that *Zaydī* heritage of the written word is rich yet rare and unique.

Attention to this particular collection of manuscripts is imperative as there is an increasing threat to *Zaydī* scholarship. Sabine Schmidtke and Jan Thiel noted that those opposing the Shī'ī branch of Islam have continuously targeted *Zaydī* manuscript collections for destruction [1]. Nonetheless, Yamani and *Zaydī* manuscript collections have received attention from Princeton University Library in conjunction with other institutions through a project named “The Yamani Manuscript Digitization Initiative” which addresses manuscripts from three private libraries in Yaman and virtually conjoins them to other Yamani manuscripts at Princeton University Library and Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. According to Princeton University Digital Library, “the private manuscript libraries of Yaman, estimated at 50,000 codices, constitutes the largest and most important set of unexamined Arabic manuscripts in the world today” [2]. Attention to this current collection of fourteen *Zaydī* manuscripts is thus vital.

SHI'Ā ISLAM AND THE ZAYDIYYA

The term Shī'a literally means “followers” or “supporters” and technically refers to a group of Muslims who recognize 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) as the legitimate caliph after the death of the prophet Muḥammad and who derive their religious code and spiritual inspiration from the prophet and the prophet's descendants (*ahl al-bayt*) and in particular the lineage of 'Alī's marriage with the prophet's daughter Fāṭima (d. 11/633).

Divided into various groups, the Shī'a were the earliest example of a sectarian community. Following the death of their third *imām*, al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in 61/680, and due to the quiescent attitude of his son 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn (d. 92 or 94 / 711 or 713) [3], the first conflict over the leadership of the Shī'a was born [4]. The Shī'a in Kūfa, seeking an active movement against the rule of the Umayyads, abandoned 'Alī Zayn

al-‘Ābidīn and supported instead ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib's son, Muḥammad (d. 81/700—701), from a Ḥanafī woman named Khawla bint Ja‘far b. Qays, and with that forming a group of their own.

Following the death of ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn the Shī‘a divided further into two fractions. Once again we witness a group supporting an active movement against the Umayyads led by Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 122/740) and another supporting the quiescent figure of ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn's other son, Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114 or 117 or 118 / 732 or 735 or 736) [5].

Often termed “moderate” or “the practical group of the Shī‘a” and commonly referred to as the “Fivers”, the Zaydiyya preferred Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn to Muḥammad al-Bāqir for his activist revolutionary stance against the Umayyad dynasty. Zayd was the first descendant of al-Ḥusayn to rebel openly against the Umayyads, which led to his violent death in 122/740. After his death the Zaydīs took part in several risings but they were not a united body. Some sources name eight different schools among the Zaydiyya. The school founded by al-Qāsim al-Rassī (d. 246/860) is the only surviving school today, mainly in Yaman with smaller numbers in ‘Irāq and some parts in Africa.

The Zaydiyya became the first Shī‘ī movement to achieve political independence by establishing a dynasty (a Zaydī imāmate) in Ṭabaristān, on the Caspian Sea, in 250/864 by al-Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884), a follower of al-Qāsim al-Rassī, and another imāmate in Yaman in 280/893 by al-Qāsim al-Rassī's grandson al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Rassī (d. /911) [6]. Al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq established his capital in Ṣa‘da. The impact of Mu‘tazilī theology on Zaydiyya is evident in the writings of al-Hādī which started a legacy of long-lasting Zaydī scholarship [7]. The theological mainstream in both dynasties developed in different directions after the death of al-Hādī in 298/911. The majority of the Yamani Zaydīs continued in the footsteps of al-Hādī who showed an inclination to the Baghdādī school of the Mu‘tazila whereas the Caspian Zaydīs adopted the teachings of the Mu‘tazila school of Baṣra.

The Zaydiyya support any qualified member of the family of the prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) who claims the imāmate through a formal call to allegiance (*da‘wa*) and armed rising (*khurūj*) against the illegitimate rulers. In addition to his descent, the qualifications of the *imām* include knowledge in religious matters, ability to render independent judgment (*ijtihād*) in law, piety, courage and integrity. Zaydī *imāms* are generally not considered

as infallible (*ma‘ṣūm*), though some Zaydīs conceded such immunity to the first three *imāms*, that is, ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. The lack of any of the qualifications, and particularly by moral offences, forfeits the imāmate. Only the most excellent candidate can be the rightful *imām*.

Those recognizing Muḥammad al-Bāqir as the rightful heir later divided into two groups following the death of his son Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765). As early as the eighth century we notice not only the emergence of the Zaydī community, or the “Fivers”, but also the emergence of the Baghdādī “Imāmiyya” or “Twelver” community, which believed in the imāmate of Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq's son Mūsā al-Kāzīm (d. 183/799) and his descendants; and the “Ismā‘īlī” community, which believed in the imāmate of Ja‘far's eldest son Ismā‘īl (d. 142/760) and his descendants.

The Twelvers held that the known lines of *imāms* through Mūsā al-Kāzīm, the seventh *imām*, came to an end with the eleventh, Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, who died in the year 260/874 leaving no heirs to succeed him. The Twelvers then developed a concept of a hidden twelfth *imām*, Muḥammad, who would eventually appear as the *mahdī*, the “guided one”, the messiah chosen by God to restore the true faith of Islam and to establish the reign of justice in the world. Until that day comes, and until the *mahdī* descends, the community is led by agents acting on behalf of the hidden *imām*. Politically, the Twelvers were quietists.

The Ismā‘īlīs on the other hand, from whom the Fāṭimids descend, held that the imāmate had passed on from Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq to his grandson Muḥammad through Ismā‘īl, who was the true *imām* but had predeceased his father. According to their doctrine, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl was not only the seventh *imām* and the chosen messiah, the *mahdī*, but also the seventh and the last prophet after the prophet Muḥammad, who would return to this world to establish everlasting justice. They profess that in the history of mankind there were to be seven prophets, each complemented with a *wasī*, who in turn would be followed by a cycle of six *imāms*. The prophet Muḥammad, in the Ismā‘īlī view, was the sixth prophet, and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was his *wasī* who was followed by a cycle of six *imāms* culminating in Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the son of Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. The Ismā‘īlīs were political activists leading rebellions against the ‘Abbāsids, as they were devoted *dā‘īs* (missionaries) converting new peoples to their faith.

LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS

This collection of fourteen manuscripts exhibits the vitality intrinsic to the Islamic manuscript tradition; it includes a fine sequence of manuscripts demonstrating a chain of interlocked text, commentary and super-commentary which bind these Muslim scholars together.

1. Abū al-Ḥasan, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim. *Tajrīd al-Kashshāf ma‘a ziyādāt nukat liṭāf* (“Illuminating

the Revealer [Being an Abridgement of al-Zamakhsharī's Commentary on the Qur‘ān] and some Nice Anecdotes”). Part one of two. Muḥarram 876 / June 1471.

This is an abridgement by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim (d. 836/1433) of al-Zamakhsharī's late fourteenth century exhaustive linguistic commentary on the Qur‘ān entitled *al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā‘iq al-tanzīl* (“The Expounder of the Truths of the Revelation”). This copy was written just 38 years

after the death of the author. Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad is a descendant of the royal family of Zaydī *imāms* of Ṣana‘ā in Yaman. No further information is available about the particulars of his life.

Arabic manuscript, ff. IX+209, 29.0×22.0 cm, copied on thick, dark buff paper, with 32 lines per page of black *naskhī* script, certain words and passages picked out in red, others in large bold black; text ends with *sūra* 18, colophon on fol. 209v; marginal annotations throughout, flyleaves heavily annotated; some faint marginal staining, edges trimmed; in contemporary, most probably North African, brown leather, elaborately tooling, double border consists of impressions of fillets and cable work, the outer panel with inscriptions, inner panel with corner pieces and central roundels surrounded by an eight-scalloped border, flecks project from the conjoined roundels as from the corner pieces; crudely re-backed, all corners and edges in-filled.

This text was published in Ṣana‘ā in Yaman by Mu‘assasāt al-Imām Zayd b. ‘Alī. Other manuscript copies are available at Umm al-Qurā University Library in Makka (*al-safar al-awwal* only) [8]; and at Kuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, India [9].

2. Al-‘Ansī, ‘Abd Allāh b. Zayd b. Aḥmad. *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā [ṭarīq] najāt al-‘ibād* (“A Book of Guidance to the Way of Worshipers’ Salvation”). Copied by ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad al-Munaqqadī. Arabian Peninsula, 20 Rajab 1323 / 5 June 1817.

This is Zaydī prayer manual. According to Schmidtker ‘Abd Allāh b. Zayd al-‘Ansī (d. 667/1269)

distanced himself from Baṣran Mu‘tazilī teachings, while reverting to the doctrines of al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm and al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq, although al-‘Ansī also tended to adopt the teachings of the Baghdādī Mu‘tazila and, at times, positions held by Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī [10].

Arabic manuscript, ff. VI+247, 25.5×19.5 cm, copied on thick, buff paper, with 17 lines per page of black *naskhī* script, partially vocalized, certain words and sentences picked out in large red *naskhī* verging on *thuluth*, others in large black; title on fol. 1r, colophon on fol. 247v gives the date of composition as last Friday of Rabī‘ II 632 / January 1235, a note on the right of colophon states that the writing of this manuscript copy started on Wednesday 18 Jumādā II 1232 / 5 May 1817 and ended on 20 Rajab 1323 / 5 June 1817, inscription on left of colophon stating that this manuscript was copied by its owner ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad al-Munaqqadī (from Qā‘ *Khabrā*’ al-Munaqqā, Makka); occasional marginalia, some late marginal annotations in blue crayon, some faint marginal staining; in contemporary brown leather binding with flap; rubbed.

3. Al-Dawwārī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥābis al-Safādī. *Kitāb al-Idāh al-kāshif li-ma‘ānī daqā’iq al-Miṣbāh* (“A Book of Definitions Revealing the Meanings of *Shams* al-Dīn al-Raṣṣās’ Work on Zaydī Dogmatics”). 20 Jumādā II 1315 / 17 November 1897.

A commentary by al-Dawwārī (d. 1061/1651) on *Miṣbāh al-‘ulūm fī ma‘rifat al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm* (“The Guiding Light of Sciences on Knowing the Almighty”), being thirty questions in the field of Zaydī dogmatics, composed by *Shams* (Bahā’) al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣṣās al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 656/1258).

Arabic manuscript, ff. XVII+144, 26.0×18.5 cm, copied on thick paper, with 24 lines per page of black *naskhī* verging on *riqā’*, certain words and phrases picked out in red, others in green; colophon on fol. 133r gives the date of composition as Tuesday 19 Rajab 1028 / 2 July 1619, a note on the right of the colophon gives the date of this manuscript copy 20 Jumādā II / 17 November 1897, a note on the left of the colophon states that this copy was written by its owner Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Madūmī (*sic!*); marginal annotations throughout; text followed by 12 folios of notes and commentaries, front flyleaves with notes in different hands, back flyleaves with notes and extracts from various works signed by the same owner as above, followed by tables and further notes; occasional damp-stains and marginal soiling; in contemporary red leather with flap, blind-tooled and gold painted with embossed paper medallions; a few repaired wormholes; repaired.

4. Ibn al-Miftāḥ, ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī al-Qāsim. *Sharḥ al-Azhār al-muntaza‘ī al-mukhtār min al-ghayth al-midrār* (“Explaining the Selected Flowers from the Torrential Shower [Being an Abridgement of Ibn al-Murtaḍā’s Commentary on his Own Work on Zaydī Law]”). Copied by Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Alī b. al-Qāḍī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-‘Ansī. Muḥarram 1065 / November 1654.

An extensively annotated seventeenth century manuscript copy of an abridgement of Ibn al-Murtaḍā *al-Ghayth al-midrār al-mufattiḥ li-kamā‘im al-azhār* (“The Constant Rain on the Essentials of Islamic Jurisprudence according to the Pious Jurists”), which is, in turn, a commentary on Ibn al-Murtaḍā’s *al-Azhār fī fiqh al-a‘imma al-aṭhār* (“Blossoming Flowers on Islamic Jurisprudence according to the Pious Jurists”), which remains until today the most authoritative legal reference for the Zaydīs of Yaman.

Arabic manuscript, ff. VIII+375, 30.0×21.5 cm, copied on thick, buff paper, with 33 lines per page of black *naskhī*, certain words and passages picked out in red, others in black majuscule, reading marks in red, catchwords in black; abundant commentaries filling the margins throughout as well as front and back flyleaves, more commentaries on slips of tipped-in paper; in modern dark chocolate morocco with flap, blind-tooled borders, early Islamic endbands.

Other manuscript copies available at Princeton University Library [11].

5. Ibn al-Miftāḥ, *op. cit.* Copied by Ṣāliḥ b. Qāsim b. Faṭḥallāh. 1004 or 1104 / 1595 or 1692.

Another copy of *Sharḥ al-Azhār*. Arabic manuscript, ff. XV+304, 30.5×21.5 cm, copied on thick, buff paper,

with 32 lines per page of black *naskhī*, certain words and sentences picked out in red, rubricated in majuscule red-outlined black *naskhī*; signed by the copyist; extensive marginalia and interlinear annotations throughout, ownership inscriptions to front and rear fly-leaves; in contemporary dark brown morocco with flap, central medallions, original Islamic end bands; old crude repairs.

6. Ibn al-Miftāh, *op. cit.* Copied by ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Yaḥyā b. Šālīḥ b. Yaḥyā al-Saḥwalī. Friday 29 Muḥarram 1197 / 4 January 1783.

A third copy of *Sharḥ al-Azhār*. Arabic manuscript, ff. XI+390, 32.0×24.0 cm, copied on thick, slightly burnished paper, with 27 to 28 lines per page of black *naskhī* script, within a double frame of red rules (21.0×11.8 cm) but for fols. 1v—2r which are within a frame of gold bands, certain words and sentences picked out in red, others in majuscule black or yellow, chapter headings in majuscule yellow, extensive marginal annotations in minute *naskhī* verging on *riqā’* filling a larger red frame (28.0×17.5 cm); title on fol. 1r accompanied by a handful of ownership inscriptions, one of which dated 7 Rajab 1246 / 22 December 1830 and another Friday 5 Šafar 1196 / 20 January 1782; colophon on fol. 390v, various notes on back fly-leaves; some edges repaired, occasional infilling with toned paper; in modern dark chocolate morocco with flap, blind-tooled borders, original Islamic endbands.

7. Ibn al-Miftāh. *Al-Juz’ al-akhīr min Sharḥ al-Azhār...* (The last part of “Explaining the Selected Flowers...”). Copied by Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. ... b. Ibrāhīm b. Zayd b. ‘Alī b. Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Šālīḥ al-Mashriqī (*sic!*) al-Qāsimī al-Ḥarā’irī. 11 Jumādā II 1310 / 31 December 1892.

The last part of *Sharḥ al-Azhār*. Arabic manuscript, ff. XXII+306, 35.5×26.0 cm, copied on thick paper with two apparent watermarks, one showing a half-moon in a trefoil motif and the other with the inscription “E I V” and sometimes “E I A”, with 22 to 25 lines per page of black *naskhī* script, certain words and passages in red, others in a bold black majuscule, and some in yellow outlined in black or red; dated and signed by the scribe in a colophon on fol. 306r; abundant marginal annotations in minute *naskhī* verging on *riqā’* arranged diagonally in triangular sections, flyleaves heavily annotated; occasional staining; in contemporary red leather with flap, blind-tooled, embossed paper medallions, Islamic end bands; a little rubbed.

8. Ibn al-Murtaḍā, al-Mahdī li-Dīn Allāh Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā. *Al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār al-jāmi’ li-madhāhib ‘ulamā’ al-amšār* (“The Copious Sea Summing the Doctrines of the Lands’ Scholars”). Book II till end. Ša’da, Yaman, 28 Muḥarram 1075 / 21 August 1664.

Al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār is Ibn al-Murtaḍā’s most valuable work on which he wrote a commentary (see No. 10 below). It is a rich and well-arranged theological and legal encyclopaedia based on 9 different works. These are: *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal* (“Sects and Creeds”), *al-Qalāyid fī al-‘aqā’id* (“Necklaces of Islamic Be-

liefs”), *Riyāḍat al-afḥām fī al-kalām* (“Exercises of the Intellect on Scholasticism”), *Mi’yār al-‘uqūl fī al-uṣūl* (“The Intellectual Standard on Islamic Fundamentals”), *al-Jawāhir wa-l-durar fī al-siyar* (“Jewels and Gems on the Biographies of the Scholars”), *al-I’timād fī al-ijtihād* (“The Corner Stone on *Ijtihād*”), *al-Aḥkām fī al-fiqh* (“The Rules of Islamic Jurisprudence”), *al-Durrar al-munīra fī gharīb fiqh al-sīra* (“The Shedding of Light on The Unusual Legal Issues Deduced from the Prophet’s Biography”), and *Takmilat al-aḥkām fī al-akhlāq wa-tasfiyat al-bātin min al-āthām* (“The Complement to the Rules of Ethics and Inner Purification”).

Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 836/1432) was one of the Zaydī *imāms* of Yaman. He was a mediocre ruler as he lacked the necessary military and administrative ability but on the other hand he was a sound scholar and a prolific author. He wrote a great deal, specifically dogmatic, legal and paraenetic works. He was also a poet and worked on grammar and logic. His other well-known work is *Kitāb al-Azhār fī fiqh al-‘imma al-aḥār*.

Arabic manuscript, ff. VI+298, 30.5×21.0 cm, copied on paper, with 31 lines per page of black *naskhī* script, certain words and sentences picked out in red, chapter headings in black majuscule; incomplete at beginning, text covers Book II till the end of the work (incorporating Book III), colophon on fol. 298v gives the place of transcription *bi-madīnat al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn Ša’da*; several ownership inscriptions, occasional marginalia; damp-stained with some affect to text, heavy marginal fraying to initial leaves, slight affect to text; a few repaired tears; in modern imitation leather.

9. Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *op. cit.* Book III: *Kitāb al-Waqf* (“The Book of *Waqf*”) till end. Probably 9th / 15th century.

Arabic manuscript, ff. V+241, 28.0×20.0 cm, copied on thick, dark buff paper, with 23 to 24 lines per page of black *naskhī*, majuscule rubrication, reading marks and certain words and phrases picked out in red, catchwords, title given on fol. 1r, colophon on fol. 241v states that the author completed this work on Monday 9 Šahābān 820 / 21 December 1417 at the citadel of Abū Yazīd (Yaman), copyist signature and date of copy erased; occasional marginalia, ownership inscriptions, some in Persian, to the front fly-leaves; fly-leaves with two apparent watermarks, one showing a half-moon in a trefoil motif and the other with the inscription *bayād Abū Šhubbāk Istambūlī ‘Alī aṣīlī* (*sic!*), which most probably refers to the saint ‘Alī Abī Šhubbāk the great grandson of Aḥmad al-Rifā’ī; edges with old repairs, marginalia unaffected; in red leather with flap, blind-tooled, Islamic endbands.

10. Ibn al-Murtaḍā. *Ghāyat al-afkār wa-nihāyat al-anzār al-muḥīta bi-‘ajā’ib al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār* (“Aims of Thoughts and Ends of Prospects Surrounding the Wonders of the Copious Sea”). Book II. Copied by ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad. Saturday 4 Rabī’ I 875 / 31 August 1470.

An early copy of Ibn al-Murtaḍā’s own commentary on *al-Baḥr al-zakḥkhār* (mentioned above), copied just 33 years after his death.

Arabic manuscript, ff. II+315, 28.5×22.5 cm, copied on thick polished, dark buff paper, with 28 to 29 lines per page of black *naskhī*, majuscule rubrication, some words and phrases picked out in red, title given on fol. 1r, colophon on fol. 315r states that the author completed this work on Tuesday 25 Dhū al-Qa'da 822 / 13 December 1419 at the citadel of Abū Yazīd in Masur (Yaman) followed by the date of this manuscript copy and the name of the scribe; numerous ownership inscriptions to title page and below the colophon, some notes on fol. 315v; fly-leaves with two apparent watermarks, one showing a half-moon in a trefoil motif and the other with the inscription *bayāḍ Abū Shubbāk Istambūlī 'Alī aṣīlī (sic!)*, which most probably refers to the saint 'Alī Abī Shubbāk the great grandson of Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī; occasional damp-staining and spotting; edges trimmed; in contemporary, most probably North African, red leather with flap, elaborately tooled with double borders consisting of impressions of fillets and cable work, the outer panel with inscriptions, inner panel with corner pieces and central roundels surrounded by an eight-scalloped border, flecks project from the conjoined roundels as from the corner pieces; Islamic end bands; re-backed, all corners and edges repaired.

11. Al-Mutawakkil 'Alā Allāh, Yaḥyā Sharaf al-Dīn b. Shams al-Dīn. *Aṭhmār al-Azhār fī fiqh al-a'imma al-aṭhār* ("Fruition of Flowering in the Doctrines of the Sainly Imāms"). Book I. 10—11 / 16th—17th century.

A text-book of Zaydī law by the Zaydī imām Yaḥyā Sharaf al-Dīn (d. 964/1557) who was proclaimed imām in 911/1506. It is an abridgement of *al-Azhār fī fiqh al-a'imma al-aṭhār* of imām Al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Murtaḍā (mentioned above), proclaimed imām in 793/1391.

Arabic manuscript, ff. XVI+257, 31.5×22.5 cm, copied on buff paper, with varying number of lines per page of black *naskhī* written horizontally and occasionally diagonally, certain words and phrases picked out in red, other words in re-outlined black majuscule; incomplete at beginning (missing text supplied on the preceding two flyleaves) and end, fols. 210—256 in a different hand, marginal annotations throughout, notes and couplets of poetry to the front and rear fly-leaves; a little damp-staining and some spotting, text unaffected, edges of fol. 1 repaired, first folio repaired at edges with strips of paper; in contemporary red leather with flap, blind-tooled, with embossed paper medallions and original Islamic end bands; a bit rubbed.

12. Najm al-Dīn al-Yamānī, Yūsuf b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Uṭhmān. *Al-Thamarāt al-yānī'a wa-l-aḥkām al-wāḍiḥa al-qāṭi'a* ("The Mellow Fruits and the Clear Decisive Decisions"). Part I. 7 Rabī' I 1079 / 9 August 1668.

Arabic manuscript, ff. III+207, 31.0×22.5 cm, copied on thick, buff paper, with 28 lines per page of black *naskhī* verging on *riqā'*, certain words and sentences picked out in red, catchwords, title given on fol. 1r as *al-juz' al-awwal min al-thamarāt*, colophon on fol. 207r,

followed by an inscription stating that this manuscript was intended for Jamāl al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ṣalāḥ al-Sharafī al-Qāsimī; occasional marginalia, ownership inscriptions to front fly-leaf and title page; fols. 1—2 heavily damp-stained and insect damaged at head margins, marginal staining throughout, some foxing, old crude repairs to fol. 207; in modern brown leather cloth binding.

Najm al-Dīn al-Yamānī died in 831/1428.

13. Al-Rassī, al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn. *Al-Mustarshid fi-l-tawḥīd* ("The Guide to the Oneness of God"). 23 Rabī' al-Ākhar 972 / 28 November 1564.

Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, from the Saudi Arabian town al-Rass, was the grandson of the Zaydī scholar al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 245/860). In 279/893 he was called to come from Baṣra to Yaman to mediate between quarrelling local tribes and was eventually recognized, by the Khawlan tribe in Ṣa'da, as imām and surnamed "He who leads the way to the truth" (al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq). His power extended to Najrān in 283/897 and Ṣan'ā' in 288/901 and Zaydī rule was thus established in Yaman and it continued to be an important part of Yamani history, politics and culture for the following ten centuries. In his juristic writings, of which the main ones are *Kitāb al-Aḥkām* ("The Book of Islamic Rules") and *al-Muntakhab*, al-Hādī adopted the doctrine of his grandfather al-Qāsim who followed the Medinian legal tradition. And so, the Zaydī legal school in Yaman came to be called the Qāsimiyya — Hādawiyya. In theology, however, al-Hādī was more of a rationalist and his teachings were close to those of the Baghdādī Mu'tazila. As for the imāmate, al-Hādī was a Jarūdī Shī'ī, condemning the caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Uṭhmān as usurpers. All the later Yamani Zaydīs remained faithful to al-Hādī's legal teachings which were systematically set forth in the work of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Murtaḍā entitled *Kitāb al-Azhār*, which remains until today the most authoritative legal reference for the Yamani Zaydīs (see above). Al-Rassī died in 298/911.

Arabic manuscript, ff. XXI+321, 29.0×21.0 cm, copied on thick, buff paper, with 19 to 25 lines per page of black *naskhī*, initial three leaves supplied on later paper with two apparent watermarks; one showing a half-moon in a trefoil motif and the other with the inscription *bayāḍ Abū Shubbāk Istambūlī 'Alī aṣīlī (sic!)*, which most probably refers to the saint 'Alī Abī Shubbāk the great grandson of Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī; several colophons — fol. 166v: Saturday 3 Ṣafar 972 / 10 September 1564 written by 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥumayd b. Ṣalāḥ b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣāḍ, fol. 239v: 2 Rabī' al-Ākhar 972 / 7 November 1564, fol. 247v: 1 Rabī' al-Ākhar 972 / 6 November 1564 written by 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥumayd al-Raṣṣāṣ (*sic!*), fol. 269v states that the narration and collation of this part was completed on Tuesday... Rabī' al-Ākhar 972 / November — December 1564 followed by the date of composition on Saturday 1 Rabī' al-Ākhar 972 / 6 November 1564 by

‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥumayd b. Ṣalāḥ b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Raṣāḍ, fol. 295r: Sunday 16 Rabī‘ al-Awwal 972 / 22 October 1564, fol. 314v: 23 Rabī‘ al-Ākhar 972 / 28 November 1564, and the final colophon on fol. 321v dated Rabī‘ al-Ākhar 972 / November — December 1564; occasional marginalia, extensive marginal annotations in blue ink on fols. 314v—315r, numerous notes and ownership inscriptions to front and rear fly-leaves some of which have been obliterated, detailed table of contents on rear fly-leaf 1; edges trimmed with some loss to marginalia; miss-bound, in brown leather with flap, blind tooled borders and central medallions.

14. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, al-Nāṭiq bi-l-Ḥaqq Abū Ṭālib. *Kitāb al-Taḥrīr* (“The Book of Interpretation”). Possibly 9th / 15th century.

Arabic manuscript, ff. III+200, 24.5×18.5 cm, copied on thick, buff paper, with 25 lines per page of black *naskhī*, certain words and phrases picked out in red, chapter headings in large bold black script, old repairs to the edges of fols. 6, 8—11 and 199—200 supplied at a later stage on different paper, ownership inscription on title page obliterated; age browning and occasional staining (not affecting text); modern dark chocolate morocco with flap, blind tooled borders and original medallions re-applied to the boards.

Notes

1. S. Schmidtke, J. Thiele, *Preserving Yemen's Cultural Heritage: The Yemen Manuscript Digitization Project* (Sanaa, 2011), p. 7.
2. See: http://pudl.princeton.edu/collection.php?c=pudl0079&sort=title&rpp=14&contrib_f=Ibn%20Miftāh,%20'Abd%20Allāh%20ibn%20Abī%20al-Qāsim,%20d.%201472.
3. See K. V. Zettersteen, “‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn”, *EI* (Leiden, 1987), i, p. 288.
4. The *imāms* are the descendants of the prophet Muḥammad through his daughter Fāṭima and his cousin and son-in-law ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Each *imām* descended in the line of ‘Alī, who is considered the first *imām*, by way of designation (*naṣṣ*).
5. See: Fr. Buhl, “Muḥammad b. ‘Alī”, *EI*, vi, p. 670.
6. Author of manuscript No. 13 in the list below.
7. See more on al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Rassī under the description of manuscript No. 13 in the list below.
8. Ms No. 12822. See: https://uqu.edu.sa/lib/digital_library/scripts_subjects_view/ar/3/علوم+قرآنال.
9. Ms No. 1346. See: <http://kblibrary.bih.nic.in/Vol36/Bp021.htm>.
10. Schmidtke, Thiele, *op. cit.*, p.18
11. The Yemeni Manuscript Digitization Initiative by Princeton University Library and Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. See: http://pudl.princeton.edu/collection.php?c=pudl0079&sort=title&rpp=14&contrib_f=Ibn%20Miftāh,%20'Abd%20Allāh%20ibn%20Abī%20al-Qāsim,%20d.%201472.